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Newport, RI**

**PRTs: IMPROVING OR UNDERMINING THE SECURITY FOR
NGOs AND PVOs IN AFGHANISTAN?**

By

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

The indiscriminate and, in some cases, deliberate and systematic targeting of civilian humanitarian aid workers by terrorist and extremist groups in Afghanistan has created an increasingly complex security challenge for both the military and non-governmental organization (NGO) humanitarian aid workers. The provisional reconstruction team (PRT) model was launched by the U.S. Department of Defense in November 2002 to facilitate reconstruction, extend the reach of the Afghan central government, establish favorable working conditions for humanitarian aid workers and build a foundation for sustainable post-conflict security. The PRT model is a novel approach to the problems now faced in Afghanistan, but its success and future employment hinges on its ability to accomplish all its stated objectives. Are we trying to do too much with too little (has economy of force been driven to the extreme), or is a smaller footprint PRT the right approach? This paper explores the evolution of the PRT in Afghanistan, analyzes this security challenge as it relates to the military's role and responsibility in providing a safe and secure environment for NGOs to operate, and offers suggestions for enhancing PRT-NGO integration.

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Abbreviations

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ANA	Afghanistan Nation Army
ANP	Afghanistan National Police
AO	Area of Operations
AOR	Area of Responsibility
CA	Civil Affairs
CAP	Civil Action Program
CJCMOTF	Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force
CMOC	Civil-Military Operations Center
DoD	Department of Defense
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JRT	Joint Regional Team
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RDZ	Regional Development Zone
SOF	Special Operating Forces
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

INTRODUCTION

On 7 October 2001, President George W. Bush announced the commencement of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. OEF marked the first major operation conducted by the U.S. military in response to the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as the first major operation conducted in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). By mid-March 2002, the Taliban had been removed from power and Al Qaeda networks had either been destroyed or reduced to isolated pockets of resistance. By 2003, U.S. and Coalition forces began focusing on a transition from Phase III Combat to Phase IV Post-Conflict Stability and Support Operations in Afghanistan.¹

Fast-forwarding to April 2004, one third of Afghanistan still remains too insecure and turbulent to accommodate non-governmental organization (NGO) and private voluntary organization (PVO) aid workers.² In southeastern Afghanistan, anarchy, fighting between warlords, and insurgency by Taliban remnants persist or have reconstituted. Military personnel and international civilian aid workers continue to face daily security challenges posed by Islamic extremists and separatists as well as the humanitarian consequences of a society shattered by more than twenty-four years of war.

During the first four months of 2004, thirteen humanitarian aid workers were killed in Afghanistan, already equaling the total number of aid workers killed in all of 2003.³

Indiscriminate and, in some cases, deliberate targeting of NGO staff members by extremist groups in Afghanistan, designed to undermine hope of humanitarian progress and intimidate humanitarian aid organizations, has created an increasingly more complex security challenge for both military and NGO personnel. Afghanistan insurgents now make no distinction between military combatants and civilian NGO aid workers, viewing both as Western usurpers and extensions of U.S. political and military agendas.⁴ In a message faxed to the Associated Press in September 2003, the Taliban stated: "Our government has always respected the people who are working in NGOs that really want to build Afghanistan. But

there is another kind of NGO, which only uses the name NGO but is actually working and spying for the U.S. We advise Taliban all over the country to attack them and extradite them from Afghanistan.”⁵ These attacks continue to plague aid workers and have forced several NGOs to withdraw their staffs and temporarily suspend humanitarian activities in Afghanistan in 2003.⁶

In addition to the residual threat posed by terrorists and warlords, poor infrastructure, a weak economy, a significant illicit drug trade, four years of drought and a poor education system have contributed to the instability in Afghanistan.⁷ To tackle the complex emergency and causes of instability now faced in Afghanistan, the Department of Defense (DoD) announced its plans to deploy Joint Regional Teams (JRTs) to the country in November 2002. The JRT concept was devised as a way of using US and Coalition civil affairs (CA) and other forces to strengthen the reach of the Afghanistan central government. Secondary purported benefits of the JRTs were identified as: facilitating reconstruction, establishing favorable working conditions for humanitarian aid workers, and building a foundation for sustainable post-conflict security.⁸ In January 2003, at the request of the Afghanistan government, JRTs were renamed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).

The PRT model is both a novel and unorthodox approach to the problems now faced in Afghanistan, but its success and future employment hinges on the PRTs’ ability to effectively accomplish their stated objectives with an economy of manpower and resources. This paper will explore the evolution of the PRT in Afghanistan, analyze the security challenge as it relates to the military’s roles and responsibilities in providing a safe and secure environment for NGOs and offer suggestions for enhancing PRT-NGO working relations.

PRT COMPOSITION, SKILL SETS and OBJECTIVES

PRTs are an alternative reconstruction model combining both security and reconstruction elements. The first United States-led PRT was established in Gardez, Afghanistan, in February 2003, while the most recent was established in Qalat in April 2004.⁹ To date, twelve U.S. and multinational PRTs are operational throughout Afghanistan (see Figure 1) with up to six more scheduled for deployment by the fall of 2004. The notional PRT is a synergistic merger of military forces and civilian agencies individually tailored to meet the needs of the province it will serve. Compared to a conventional peacekeeping force, PRTs have a much smaller footprint and a more heterogeneous composition. The methods used by a PRT to achieve its ends are also quite different from conventional peacekeeping or peace enforcement. Peace enforcement involves the application or threat of military force to maintain or restore peace and order; PRTs seek ways to resolve rather than just to manage conflict by providing a multidimensional workforce with the skills to interact with the local population and provide a wide range of services and capabilities.¹⁰ In short, PRTs are an attempt to attack the enemy's (terrorists and anti-government groups) strategic center of gravity—the allegiance of the Afghan people. By simultaneously providing the Afghan people with tangible humanitarian, reconstruction and security benefits, PRTs build goodwill, trust, credibility and cooperation among the people, the Afghan central government and the Coalition forces.

Is the concept behind the PRT really new or just the U.S. Marine Corps' Civil Action Program (CAP) by a different name? The U.S. Marine Corps adopted the CAP from 1965 to 1971 in South Vietnam. Each CAP unit was made up of a 15-man rifle squad and a Navy corpsman who were assigned to a particular hamlet or village scattered across South

Vietnam. The aim of the CAP was pacification of the South Vietnamese people—a “hearts and minds campaign” aimed at improving the social, economic, and political development of the people in order to achieve the ultimate defeat of the enemy insurgent forces. CAP units trained platoons of local militia, provided vaccinations and medical care, helped build schools and hospitals, installed pumps for drinking water and distributed emergency food supplies. The CAP met with mixed success but was never given a fair test. Individual CAP units were too dispersed to achieve maximum effect, and these units always took a back seat to the main war effort, both in terms of resources and manpower.¹¹ Undoubtedly, many parallels can be drawn between the U.S. Army’s PRT in 2004 and the U.S. Marines’ CAP in 1965. PRT and CAP strategies and objectives are remarkably similar, yet their composition and skill sets are decidedly different.

Command and Control

PRTs are commanded by field grade officers and fall under the direct command and control of the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force (CJCMOTF), headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan.¹² The CJCMOTF is a special purpose task force composed of coalition forces, flexible in size and composition, and organized to plan, coordinate and conduct civil-military operations in its area of operations (AO). In June 2002, the CJCMOTF became a subordinate command of Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF-180). Both the CJCMOTF and CJTF-180 fall under the unified combatant command and operational control of U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) for all military operations in Afghanistan.¹³ The current U.S. and Coalition long-range plan is to employ at least one PRT in each of Afghanistan’s thirty-two provinces and to have the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) assume all command and control functions.¹⁴ As the

capabilities of a province improve over time, PRT duties will gradually be transferred to the Afghan government and civilian sector.¹⁵

Concept of Operations

Each PRT is composed of three functional units: a civilian section that facilitates the delivery of humanitarian aid, reconstruction and development projects by international organizations and NGOs; a military section that facilitates the development of Afghan security forces, monitors the security situation in the region and, where possible, stabilizes local security; and a headquarters section comprised of both military and civilian personnel which provides logistics, intelligence, force protection and linguistic support (see Figure 2). Although individually tailored for each province, some generalities can be made regarding the make-up and skill sets offered by a typical U.S.-led PRT:

- PRTs generally consist of 50–100 military and civilian personnel. The military contingent, the largest component of a PRT, usually is a blend of CA (from a broad range of disciplines); Special Operations Forces (SOF); and U.S. Army security and combat support personnel.¹⁶ The size and balance of the forces and capabilities of a PRT are directly related to the level of political and institutional sophistication and the level of stability and security of the region in which it will work. If a PRT is located in a particularly hazardous area, it will usually have a larger force protection element. If it is located in an area where reconstruction is a priority, then it will typically be front-loaded with a higher percentage of civilian specialists. In Gardez, for instance, feuding warlords and Taliban-led militants were seen as major concerns, so the PRT deploying to that region placed a high priority on security “presence” and “deterrence” patrols by military personnel, whereas, in more stable areas such as the PRTs located in and around Bagram, the focus has been on reconstruction—building infrastructure, schools and medical clinics.¹⁷

- Each PRT has a small Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC), usually staffed

by six-person CA teams whose primary responsibility is to respond to local residents' concerns, coordinate the military response to requests for relief assistance, and determine the priority reconstruction needs of villages within the PRTs' area of responsibility (AOR). The CMOC interacts with provincial and regional Afghan government officials, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) and other UN agencies, NGOs and local nationals to share relevant information, harmonize PRT reconstruction projects with the assistance community's activities, and match requests for assistance with available resources.¹⁸ PRT CMOCs usually operate from storefront offices established away from the PRT compounds to facilitate civil-military interaction and cooperation.

- PRTs are always multi-agency, interdisciplinary and increasingly multinational.¹⁹

They are an integrated mix of military personnel, diplomats and civilian assistance specialists containing the following functional elements and skill sets: U.S. State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Psychological Operations Team, Military Security Observer Team, and headquarters support personnel. Several PRTs have additionally incorporated representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Afghan Interior Ministry, U.S. Justice Department police trainers and Drug Enforcement Agency representatives for counter-narcotics efforts.²⁰

Objectives

PRT objectives fall under three main headings: enhance security, strengthen the reach of the Afghanistan central government and facilitate reconstruction. Viewing each of these objectives in detail:

(1) Enhance Security: PRTs are not security or combat centric units. The PRT has integrated force protection in the form of a small group of infantry soldiers. All military

personnel wear uniforms and carry personal weapons only for self-defense. Dialogue and liaison are their preferred weapons. Given their relatively small size, the PRT was not designed or intended to serve as a show of military force but rather only a show of presence to assist in proving local security. At least five of the PRTs in southeastern Afghanistan, where insecurity is still a problem, have been located near forward bases of operations to shorten lines of communication and enhance force protection.²¹ The PRTs' security focus and effect is indirect—they help the Afghan people create a safer environment for themselves, and their presence in a region also provides a deterrent effect on local militias, warlords and insurgents.²²

PRT Military Security Observer Teams are tasked with establishing and maintaining relationships with law enforcement and intelligence personnel; observing, assessing and reporting the capabilities of local military forces, border police, local and regional police and facilitating improvement of their capabilities; and conducting regular assessments of the acceptance of the rule of law, intra-regional fighting, security and stability in the region.²³ Standing Rules of Engagement apply to PRT security forces, which allow weapons to be used for self-defense when all other options, including the deployment of local Afghanistan security forces, have proven ineffective.²⁴

(2) Strengthening the Reach of the Afghan Central Government: Although funded by and wearing the uniforms of U.S. and Coalition governments, PRTs are billed as extensions and representatives of the Afghanistan central government. They help the government provide basic services, liaison with local community leaders and provide the central government with measurable and visible progress in terms of security and reconstruction. PRT personnel also monitor and assess the progress of local civil, political and military reform in their areas of responsibility (AOR) through community engagement. They assist

the Afghan government in winning the “hearts and minds” of the people through humanitarian aid, as well as job and economic opportunities for the local population. These actions are designed to help the Afghan government extend its reach, legitimacy and credibility throughout the country. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld summed-up this role of the PRT as, “a way of having the effects of the transitional government felt and reflected outside the capital city.”²⁵

(3) Facilitate Reconstruction: PRT CA teams are responsible for conducting village assessments (in collaboration with NGOs, the UNAMA and Afghan government officials) to determine the reconstruction needs of communities. The assistance and reconstruction projects they nominate are usually funded by the DoD’s Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster and Civic Aid Program.²⁶ In addition, the teams monitor the progress of reconstruction projects and hire and manage local contractors and laborers to undertake reconstruction projects whenever possible. The PRT CA teams provide job and economic opportunities for the Afghan people, impart a sense of ownership in the reconstruction process and instill faith in the central government.

NGO COMPOSITION, SKILL SETS AND OBJECTIVES

NGOs are nonprofit organizations of private citizens usually motivated by humanitarian and/or religious values. The United Nations now recognizes over 40,000 international NGOs.²⁷ As a group, NGOs deliver more aid than the entire UN system combined, and their economic base as well as their political leverage can be significant.²⁸ Currently, more than 1,500 national and 300 international NGOs, including 160 U.S.-based private relief, development and refugee assistance NGOs, are operating in Afghanistan.²⁹

From a humanitarian aid perspective, NGOs are critical actors—private in form but

public in purpose. The UN, governments and governmental donor agencies (USAID included) finance NGOs to deliver aid in post-hostility and conflict zones because of the wide range of skills and expertise they can bring to the table. An NGO's ability to respond quickly and effectively to a crisis lessens the civil-military resources that a commander would otherwise have to devote to an operation.³⁰ NGO involvement, particularly international and UN subcontracted NGOs, also contributes to the legitimacy of the military and political effort in a theater.

NGOs are ideally suited for operating in war torn areas because they are by definition independent and neutral actors, acting only in the interest of humanitarian assistance without ties to any government or military organization. The U.S. government has become increasingly dependent on NGOs in post-hostility and complex emergency situations to provide critical expertise and vital services that the military is not well suited, structured or trained to perform. NGOs, on the other hand, are often reliant on the military to provide security and essential infrastructure for them to operate. Former Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shalikashvili best articulated this relationship when he said: "What's the relationship between a just arrived military force and the NGO and PVO that might have been working in a crisis-torn area all along? What we have is a partnership. If you are successful, they are successful; and if they are successful, you are successful. We need each other."³¹

NGOs come in all shapes and sizes but, generically, they can be grouped into four types based on the functions they perform: humanitarian assistance, human rights, civil society and democracy building, and conflict resolution.³² Some NGOs specialize in one of these functions while others perform all four. NGOs have enormous institutional diversity in

terms of their purpose, objectives, skill sets and governance. Some NGOs are based in one country or even one community, while other NGOs, such as the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) International, the largest independent, nonprofit relief and development organization in the world, is based in eleven countries and currently operating in fifteen of Afghanistan's thirty-two provinces.³³ All of these characteristics shape an NGO's operational reach, flexibility and capability in the field.

The hallmark of most NGOs is their strong link to the grass roots; their cornerstone principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence; and their adherence to the Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief.³⁴ As a result, NGOs typically dedicate themselves to the service and protection of the underserved without aligning themselves to a particular donor, government or military force.³⁵ Many NGOs avoid contact with military personnel to uphold these principles, which can create a road block for achieving effective civil-military coordination, communication and unity of effort. The fact that many governments fund NGOs, either directly or indirectly, to deliver humanitarian aid during and after military operations has called their independent actor status into question. However, most NGOs contend that funding and independence are not inextricably linked—that is, despite this economic relationship, NGOs can maintain their independence from both the government that funds them and from the military and political authorities in the countries where they are operating.

The majority of international NGOs are headquartered in Western countries—a compounding problem for the security of aid workers in Afghanistan—and frequently are on the scene before military forces arrive in an AO and usually remain long after the military has departed.³⁶ Every NGO is accountable to its donor constituency and headquarters who

establish and fund the programs the NGO undertakes in conjunction with the host country's government. NGOs are financed by private or group donations, foundation grants and government contracts.³⁷ The vast number of NGOs has led to the establishment of several consortia to help coordinate their activities, including the American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction), the International Council of Voluntary Agencies and the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR)—an umbrella group for more than 90 national and international NGOs in Afghanistan.³⁸

The strengths of NGOs include their field-based development and humanitarian aid expertise and skill sets, long-term commitment, cost effectiveness and ability to operate in areas where government agencies and international institutions may not be welcome. Because they have often been in a country for years, another important strength of NGOs is that they often speak local languages, understand religious and cultural practices and have earned the people's trust.³⁹ The weaknesses of the NGO community as a whole include their limited institutional capacity. They have no universal doctrine and many lack clear structural lines or hierarchy. Most are relatively low-tech and lack field communication system compatibility (interoperability) with the military and even other NGOs. There is generally little inter-organizational communication and coordination. Because of these weaknesses, NGOs are often reliant on military support for logistics (food, shelter, water, transport, medical supplies, etc.), communications, medical support and evacuation and security in areas of conflict or high insecurity.⁴⁰

THE NGO-PRT DIVIDE IN AFGHANISTAN

The NGO community has greeted PRTs with very mixed reviews. NGOs have labeled PRTs as everything from “security on the cheap” or “war on a budget” to “military

NGOs.” At the heart of the matter for most NGOs is a fear that because PRTs play in both the security and humanitarian aid arenas, they have placed NGOs at risk by blurring the line between military activities and impartial or neutral humanitarian action.⁴¹ Many NGOs believe that PRTs represent the politicization of aid. Because PRTs wish to be viewed as extensions of the central government, NGOs interacting with them compromise their neutrality. The problem has been magnified in a setting like Afghanistan where opposition groups like the Taliban are doing all they can to thwart the expansion of the Afghan central government—the primary objective of the PRT. NGO personnel provide soft targets for terrorists—easy to identify and easy to hit. A further blurring of the line, from the NGO perspective, occurs when NGOs participate in village assessments with uniformed PRT CA personnel and when SOF personnel attempt to integrate with the local population in civilian clothing. For these reasons, many NGOs have chosen to limit or disengage their involvement with PRTs and advocate them only for security purposes.⁴² Some NGOs have taken actions on their own or in conjunction with other NGOs to improve their field security in Afghanistan. InterAction member agencies, for instance, sponsor their own Field Security Adviser to assist member NGOs with security planning, training and assistance.⁴³

Parallel NGO arguments against the PRTs are that they are taking on humanitarian work that should be relegated to NGOs, thus creating a duplication of effort; they focus on reconstruction instead of security and do neither very well; and they provide humanitarian assistance for the sole purpose of achieving political and military strategic goals.⁴⁴

The military side of the argument is much different. The DoD widely views the PRTs as a success story.⁴⁵ The PRT model continues to evolve as the security environment in Afghanistan changes. PRTs purposely maintain a light footprint of military forces so they

are not viewed as occupation forces. Afghanistan has a long history of dealing with would-be occupying forces and has responded violently to invasive strategies by foreign governments. The size of PRTs prohibits them from directly imposing or enforcing peace in an insecure area. Their fundamental objective is to build the capacity of the Afghan government and engage local Afghans in the process. As Lieutenant General Barno, Commanding General, Combined Forces Command Afghanistan, aptly put it, “A PRT is really a catalyst. It forms a focal point in a particular area, with the goal of building not only relationships but also serving as an accelerator in the rebuilding of the nation and extending the reach of the Afghan central government.”⁴⁶

The security challenges and deficiencies of the PRTs in support of NGOs in Afghanistan have not gone unrecognized by the DoD. In February 2004, the DoD initiated two complementary strategies to the PRTs to enhance security in insecure Afghanistan provinces: Regional Development Zones (RDZs) and Area Ownership. RDZs encompass a wider geographic area than PRTs, and their purpose is to coordinate the efforts of local and international organizations within each geographic region.⁴⁷ Prior to the RDZs, coordination of international aid, Coalition activities and Afghan central government influence was conducted exclusively out of Kabul (CJTF-180 and CJCMOTF headquarters). RDZs will decentralize this coordination to individual zones so that manpower and resources can be used more effectively and efficiently. Area Ownership involves sending battalion, company or platoon sized combat units repeatedly to the same area—particularly to trouble spots—to build relationships with the local residents, gather intelligence and enhance security for both the PRTs and humanitarian aid workers.⁴⁸

Most PRTs cover vast areas with limited manpower and resources. While PRTs (like all military operations) serve a political purpose, they share for the most part common objectives and a common desired end state with their NGO counterparts of a stable and secure Afghanistan that can assume responsibility for its own security and humanitarian relief. The lack of adequate international funding, U.S. military mission creep, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) inability to significantly bolster the ISAF peacekeeping force, porous Pakistani and Iranian borders and slow progress in achieving adequately trained ANA and ANP forces have also contributed to power vacuums and seams of insecurity throughout Afghanistan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Joint Publication 3-08 states: "Commanders must understand that NGOs and PVOs have valid missions and concerns and that these may complicate the mission of U.S. forces. Such organizations may be supported where feasible in compliance with military mandates and objectives."⁴⁹ The PRTs in Afghanistan have presented the Commanders of CJTF-180 and CJCMOTF with a vexing dilemma in this regard. How can PRTs effectively and simultaneously extend the reach of the Afghan government, facilitate reconstruction, security and stability and attend to the many concerns of humanitarian aid workers to ensure a unity of effort is maintained? The following recommendations are offered as a means for enhancing PRT-NGO working relations:

- PRT strategic coordination must remain centralized. With the United States, other Coalition governments and the ISAF now contributing to the PRT pool, centralized coordination is paramount to prevent duplication of effort with the NGO community and to ensure coherent and complementary objectives and strategies are pursued and maintained by

all PRTs and NGOs.

- PRT objectives, courses of action, and rules of engagement must be clearly articulated to and coordinated with the NGO community at all levels. This imperative is particularly critical at the tactical level—the interface between the humanitarian aid workers and the PRT—via the CMOC. NGOs unwilling to participate in a PRT CMOC for fear it would compromise their neutrality, may view the UNAMA or ACBAR as an impartial and neutral alternative and intermediary source for communication, coordination and information.

- The NGOs' perspective of neutrality in the context of Afghanistan and the War on Terrorism needs revision. Humanitarian aid organizations must come to the realization that distancing themselves from the military is not a solution to their security problems in Afghanistan where both combatants and non-combatants are fair game for terrorists. This situation has been further complicated by the religious and Western affiliations of many NGOs. PRTs serve as a critical link for gathering information about terrorist activity in a Region. NGOs could potentially facilitate this process and the stability of Afghanistan if they are willing to redefine their principle of neutrality and share pertinent insurgent information and intelligence with the PRTs. Neutrality does not protect humanitarian aid workers in Afghanistan; therefore, it should not preclude NGOs from sharing information with the military, particularly when it is in their best interest security-wise to do so.

- PRTs must not serve as a substitute for combat or peacekeeping forces. Portions of Afghanistan as yet remain too unstable and volatile for PRTs and NGOs. Sending PRTs instead of conventional forces to insecure areas increases risk while mitigating the benefits and objectives of a PRT. A PRT is designed for Phase IV, not Phase III, operations.

- The United States and ISAF must make an increased effort to train and integrate the ANA and ANP. Increasing the Afghan national flavor of the PRTs, especially the proportion of ANA and ANP security forces serving with the PRTs, will better position the Afghan central government to expand its influence, establish its legitimacy and help defuse the resentment of foreign military presence.

- PRTs must receive adequate resourcing and support to achieve their ends. This is one lesson that should have been well-learned from the CAP in Vietnam. Most U.S.-led PRTs now operating in Afghanistan have insufficient military and civilian staffs to accomplish their objectives. Instead of the percentage of civilian staff increasing in the PRTs as the conditions improve in a province, they have decreased. Part of this decrease is due to “mission creep” of the various departments involved. Many civilian agencies cannot provide the requested personnel because they have reached operational overstretch, supplying personnel to support operations in Iraq, Bosnia, Haiti, East Timor and others and part is due to resourcing. Many PRTs are now operating with 95 percent military staffs, where that percentage should now be much lower.⁵⁰ Military CA and police units are also overstretched. To compound the problem of resourcing, the Secretary of Defense stated in February 2004 that he wanted U.S. troops pulled out of the PRTs as quickly as feasible.⁵¹ Is this another CAP program in the making? Based on these trends, the answer is an unequivocal “yes.”

CONCLUSION

Winning the peace is a far more complex process than winning the war in Afghanistan. Instability continues throughout many regions of Afghanistan despite the best efforts of PRTs and the ISAF, while the consequences of the conflict with Iraq further

complicate the issue. PRTs are just one of the vehicles now being employed in Afghanistan to win the peace and stabilize the country so that reconstruction and humanitarian aid can continue. But most of these are band-aid operations that will require more manpower and resources to achieve long-term success.

Afghanistan is a complex mix of state and non-state actors, and many of the key players in this mix have no interest in returning the country to peace. They seek to derail any attempts the Coalition makes to extend the government's reach. Unless the U.S. Army, the lead agency for the PRTs, redefines the PRT mission, PRTs cannot assume full responsibility for the security lapses in Afghanistan. PRTs are intended to serve as a link between the central government and the people of Afghanistan. They monitor, advise, report and share information, but above all, they are facilitators for security, reconstruction and stability. The small footprint of the PRTs is meant to reinforce the message that U.S. and Coalition forces are not there to occupy but rather to liberate. An important part of winning the peace is winning the hearts and minds of the people of Afghanistan. PRTs attempt to win hearts and minds by empowering Afghans to assist with the reconstruction and security of their own country and giving them an alternative to the separatist ideology of Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

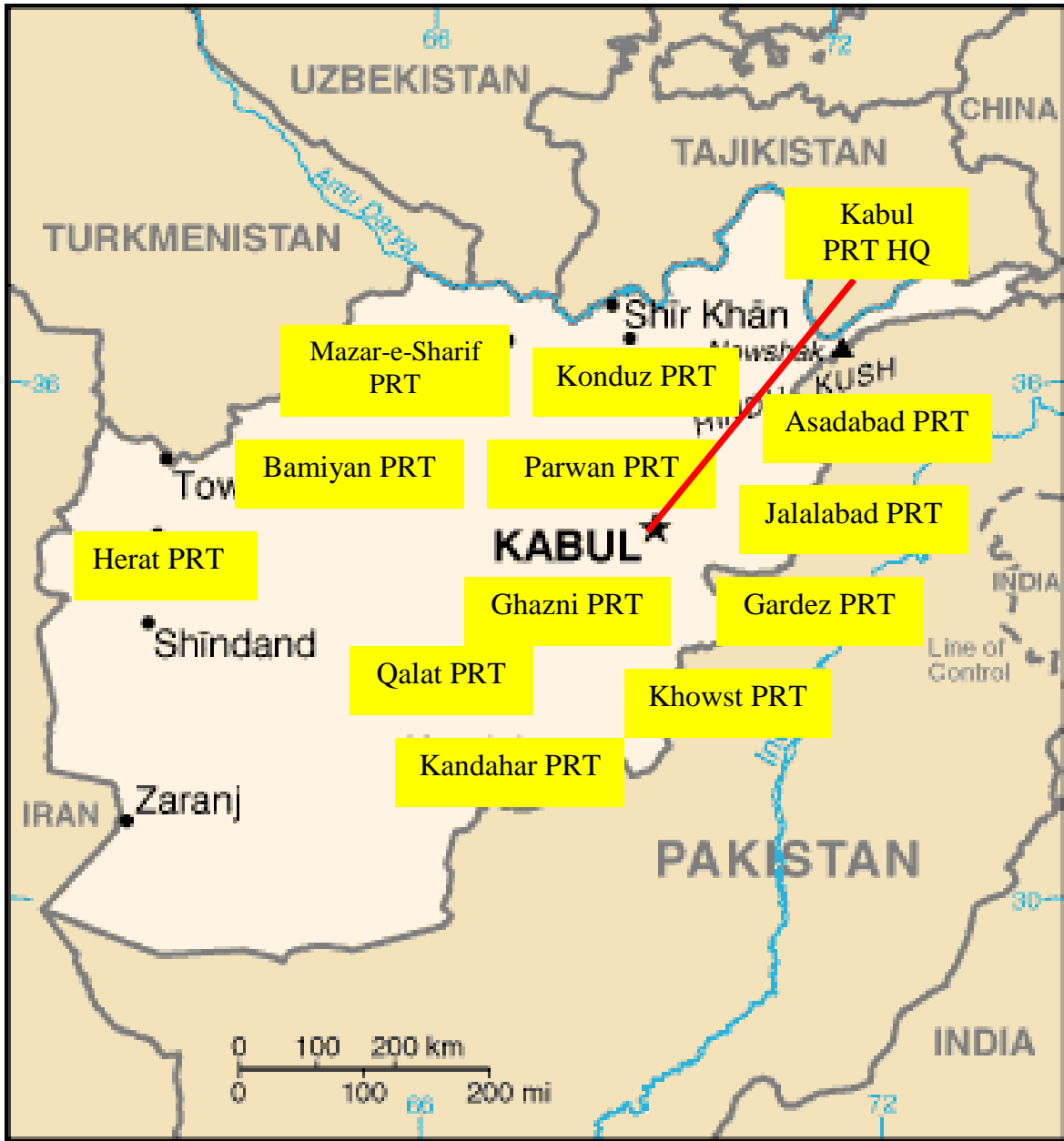
Winning the "hearts and minds" of NGOs where PRTs are concerned also remains a complex issue. In the final analysis, both PRTs and NGOs want to solve the root causes of the problems in Afghanistan, and both are working toward that end. PRTs and NGOs cannot afford to work independent of one another in Afghanistan; each must view the other as a necessary and complementary element to their own success. PRTs are security enablers for NGOs. The PRTs' mission is to enhance the working environment and create the necessary

atmosphere to achieve PRT-NGO unity of effort, not to supplant NGOs as the primary resource for rebuilding Afghanistan.

Indeed, the CAP in Vietnam shared many similar problems with those now faced by the PRTs in Afghanistan. Adequate funding and support is at the forefront. Doing more with less only goes so far, particularly where security is concerned. Second, PRTs cannot do it all. The CAP focused primarily on security and secondarily on attending to the comfort needs of the South Vietnamese people. PRTs currently have a reconstruction-centric focus. In some regions this is appropriate; in other regions it is not. Last, for the program to succeed, it must be carried to fruition—either by U.S. or Coalition forces. Pulling out prematurely will threaten the reconstruction progress that has already been made and diminish the security for both NGOs and the Afghan people. U.S. and Coalition forces are still a long ways off from winning the peace in Afghanistan, and PRT-NGO unity of effort will continue to play a crucial role in the process.

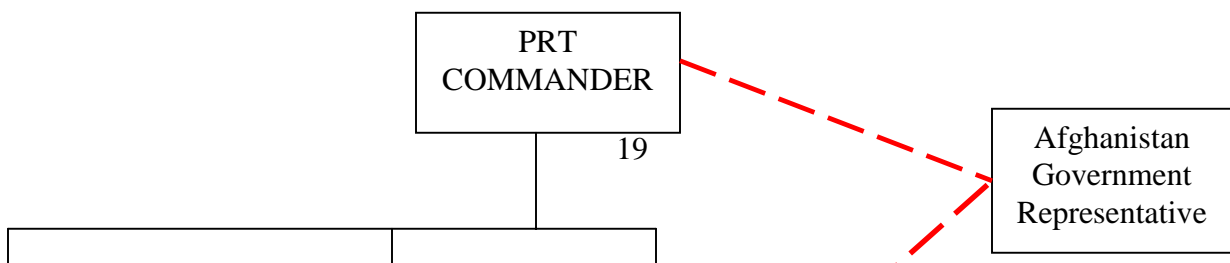
Figure 1

CURRENT PRT LOCATIONS



Source: Map adapted from Central Intelligence Agency, “World Fact Book, Afghanistan,” (Washington, DC: 18 December 2003). [online] URL: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/af.html> Accessed: 15 April 2004.

Figure 2
NOTIONAL PRT WIRE DIAGRAM



*UNAMA –United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan

Source: Joseph J Collins, “US Department of Defense, NATO and the Challenges of Afghan Security,” National Defense University, 28 January 2004, 9. [online] URL: <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/symposia/europe2004/collinsppt.pdf> Accessed: 9 April 2004.

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Transition (Phase IV). Using this definition, Phase IV includes establishing the rule of law and conducting operations in support of NGOs

² Saeed Ali Achakzai, "U.S. Forces Appeal to Afghans Against Taliban," Reuters Foundation AlertNet, 12 April 2004. [online] URL: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/ISL16267.htm> Accessed: 20 April 2004; U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations, Vol. I, Joint Pub 3-08, (Washington, DC: 9 October 1996), GL10-11. For the purpose of this paper, the term NGO and PVO are considered synonymous. Joint Publication 3-08 defines an NGO as "a non-US organization and a PVO as US-based organization." NGO is the generic reference term for the NGO/PVO community as a whole.

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⁴ Jim Lobe, "Afghanistan: Slaying of UN Aid Worker Highlights Security Woes," Global Information Network, (New York, NY: 18 November 2003): 1.

⁵ Scott Baldauf, "Aid Groups in Afghanistan Weigh Good Deeds vs. Safety," Christian Science Monitor, 28 October 2003, 7.

⁶ Virtual Research Associates, "The Year of Living Dangerously: Attacks on Humanitarian Aid Workers in 2003," (Weston, MA: 11 March 2004). [online] URL: <http://vranet.com/Govt1027/Docs/HIUWhitePaperFINALmarch112004.htm> Accessed: 20 April 2004.

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⁸ William B. Taylor, "Testimony," U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Accelerate Reconstruction in Afghanistan, (Washington, DC: 27 January 2004): 9-10. [online] URL: <http://www.state.gov/p/sa/rls/rm/28599.htm> Accessed 14 April 2004.

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¹⁰ Center For Humanitarian Cooperation, Civil-Military Cooperation, Conference Summary Report and Findings, 16 January 2003, 5-7.

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¹³ U.S. Department of Defense, "Unified Combatant Commands," DefenseLink, 27 March 2004. [online] URL: <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/almanac/unified.html> Accessed: 10 April 2004.

¹⁴ Ron Synovitz, "Afghanistan: PRTs Go Beyond Humanitarian Issues Into Security Realm," Eurasia Insight, 6 March 2004. [online] URL: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp030604.shtml> Accessed: 15 March 2004.

¹⁵ U.S. Central Command, "The PRT Concept," Coalition Bulletin 9 (January 2004): 3.

¹⁶ Civil affairs units are low-density, high-demand members of the Army Special Operations Command. More than 97 percent of civil affairs personnel are Army Reservists. The principal responsibility of civil affairs personnel is to provide a link between the military commander and the civilian populace in an area of operations.

¹⁷ George Cahlink, "Teamwork Helps Rebuild Afghanistan," National Journal 35 (Washington, DC: 20 December 2003): 3828.

¹⁸ UNAMA is an umbrella organization of the UN responsible for coordinating and facilitating the efforts of UN agencies and national and international NGOs in Afghanistan. UNAMA also acts as a facilitator for relations and communications between PRTs and the international assistance community.

¹⁹ Currently, three PRTs are staffed and commanded by Coalition forces from the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Germany.

²⁰ Psychological Operations Teams are typically three-person teams that provide basic information operations capabilities to the PRT, enlist the cooperation of the people and promote a positive image of and support for the Afghan government; Ron Synovitz, "U.S.-Led Coalition Expands Provincial Reconstruction Teams," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, (Washington, DC: 14 August 2003). [online] URL: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2003/08/mil-030814-rferl-161741.htm> Accessed: 11 April 2004.

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²⁵ Cahlink, 3828.

²⁶ Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster and Civic Aid (OHDACA) Appropriation," (Washington, DC: 2003). [online] URL: <http://www.dsca.osd.mil/programs/HA/OVERSEAS%20HUMANITARIAN,%20DISASTER,%20AND%20CIVIC%20AID2.pdf> Accessed 28 April 2004.

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